

Message Text

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20/17

ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 NSAE-00 NSCE-00 SSO-00

USIE-00 INRE-00 SAM-01 SCCT-01 SY-05 SAJ-01 PM-03

H-02 INR-07 L-02 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15

COME-00 EB-07 LAB-04 SIL-01 /071 W

----- 080014

O R 170931Z MAY 75

FM AMEMBASSY MADRID

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 1859

INFO AMEMBASSY LISBON

AMEMBASSY PARIS

C O N F I D E N T I A L MADRID 3356

C O R R E C T E D C O P Y (TEXT)

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS/ PINT, PFOR, ELAB, SP

SUBJ: TENSE BASQUE SITUATION

REF: MADRID 3196

SUMMARY: GROWING CLIMATE OF TERROR AND COUNTER-TERROR IN
BASQUE PROVINCES, TIWH FURTHER KILLINGS OF POLICEMENT BY ETA,
RIGHT-WING VIOLENCE AGAINST ETA SYMPATHIZERS, BEATING OF
PRIESTS, MAY (A) PROMPT MORE TRENIOUS GOVT MEASURES; (B)
PROVOKE MORE CHURCH/STATE HOSTILITY; AND (C) STRAIN RELATIONS
WITH FRANCE; END SUMMARY

1. ON MAY 14, FOUR PERSONS, INCLUDING A GURADIA CIVIL
OFFICER AND ETA TERRORIST, WERE KILLED IN GUERNICA,
SYMBOLIC CITY OF BASQUE NATIONALISM AND SYMBOL OF CIVIL
WAR BOMBARDMENT. POLICE SUBSEQUENTLY IDENTIFIED TWO
TERRORISTS INVOLVED IN EPISODE.
--ONE OF WHOM ESCAPED-- AS MEMBERS OF A NEW ETA COMANDO GROUP
WHICH ENTERED SPAIN FROM FRANCE ON AN ASSASSINATION MISSION
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WITH AN ETA "DEATH LIST- OF POLICEMENT. DEATH OF GURADIA

CIVIL MEMBER WAS THIRD POLICEMAN KILLED BY ETA IN ONE WEEK.

2. AREA ALSO WITNESSING COUNTER-TERROR APPARENTLY STIMULATED BY EXTREMIST RIGHTISTS, REPORTEDLY LARGELY MEMBERS OF GUERRILLEROS DE CRISTO REY, ALLEGEDLY ACTING UNDER TOLERANCE, IF NOT UNDER ACTIVE ENCOURAGEMENT AND CONNIVANCE, OF AUTHORITIES. EXTREMIST RIGHTISTS HAVE ATTACKED, BOMBED, DAMAGED, OR DESTROYED NUMBER OF COMMERCIAL AND OTHER ESTABLISHMENTS BELONGING TO PERSONS BELIEVED BE ETA OR BASQUE SEPARATIST SYMPATHIZERS, AND HAVE ASSULTED AND BEATEN UP SEVERAL SUCH SYMPATHIZERS.

3. CHURCH HAS BEEN BROUGHT INTO TENSE BASQUE SITUATION BECAUSE OF BEATINGS OF THREE PRIESTS ALLEGEDLY SYMPATHETIC WITH BASQUE NATIONALIST CAUSE, ONE OF WHOM IS IN CRITICAL CONDITION IN A BILBAO HOSPITAL WITH KIDNEY INJURIES. ADDITIONALLY, BISHOP ANOVEROS IS REPORTEDLY MEETING WITH BISHOPS OF SAN SEBASTIAN AND PAMPLONA TO ELABORATE SOME FORM OF HOMILY REACTING TO CURRENT SITUATION WHICH MAY BE READ IN BASQUE PARISHES THIS SUNDAY.

4. ON MAY 12, A RIGHTIST "NATIONAL PATRIOTIC" RALLY WAS HELD IN CENTRAL BILBAO SQUARE WHICH RALLY WAS ADDRESSED BY THE UNDER SECRETARY OF INTERIOR, CONSUL BILBAO REPORTS THAT RALLY WAS ATTENDED BY 5,000 PERSONS, MANY OF WHOM WERE BROUGHT IN ON BUSES FROM NON-BASQUE PROVINCES SUCH AS SANTANDER AND LOGRONO. ONE LEAFLET DISTRIBUTED AT RALLY DEMANDED "ARIAS NAVARRO'S RESIGNATION" AND "GOVT OF NATIONAL SALVATION". RALLY HAD MARKED FALANGIST FLAVOR AND UNDER SECRETARY OF INTERIOR SPEAKING PERSONALITY TOOK OCCASION TO ACCUSE FRENCH GOVT OF ABETTING ETA TERRORIST CRIMES BY ALLOWING ETA USE OF ITS TERRITORY TO LAUNCH ITS ATTACKS. FOLLOWING RALLY, SCATTERED GROUPS OF PERSONS DEMONSTRATED OUTSIDE FRENCH CONSULATE. ADDITIONALLY OUR CONSUL REPORTS THAT IN RECENT DAYS AT LEAST SIX CARS WITH FRENCH LICENSE PLATES HAVE BEEN SET ON FIRE.

5. PUBLIC ORDER ISSUE PRESENTED BY BASQUE SITUATION HAS LED TO CRITICISM FROM THE RIGHT. AN EDITORIAL SIGNED BY ANONYMOUS GENERAL IN RIGHT-WING "EL ALCAZAR" HAS CALLED CONFIDENTIAL

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FOR GOVT TO "FIGHT WAR WITH WAR". AT FUNERAL MASS FOR CIVIL GUARD POLICEMEN ATTENDED BY ENTIRE COUNCIL OF MINISTERS, INCLUDING ARIAS, APR 29, THERE WERE SHOUTS FOR "STRONG GOVTS, NOT WEAK ONES".

6. COMMENT: STATE OF EXCEPTION DECLARED APR 25 IN TWO BASQUE PROVINCES OF VIZCAYA AND GUIPUZCOA AND NUMEROUS ARRESTS UNDER IT, ALLEGEDLY NOW IN

HUNDREDS, HAVE FAILED AS YET TO ELIMINATE ETA TERRORISM AND MAY HAVE AT LEAST INITIALLY PROVOKED THE CONTRARY. ATTACKS ON AND MISTREATMENT OF BASQUE PRIESTS MAY TRIGGER ANOTHER SERIOUS CHURCH/STATE INCIDENT. AUTHORITIES HAVE RECENTLY PROHIBITED SEVERAL DIOCESAN MEETINGS, THEREBY DEEPENING EXISTING TENSION OVER CHURCH'S POST VATICAN II POSTURE. LASTLY SPANISH RELATIONS WITH FRANCE ARE ALSO UNDER INCREASINGLY SERIOUS STRAIN; EVER SINCE CARRERO BLANCO ASSASSINATION GOS BELIEVES FRENCH GOVT HAS BEEN TOO INDULGENT WITH BASQUES WHO TAKE REFUGE IN FRANCE. ANTI-FRENCH INCIDENTS IN BASQUE PROVINCES HAVE ALREADY STRAINED RELATIONS OVER BASQUE ISSUE.

7. GOVT AND GUARDIA CIVIL LEADERS HAVE PLEDGED TO MAINTAIN ORDER IN BASQUE PROVINCES AND COULD ADOPT EVEN STRICTER MEASURES. CONSUL BILBAO REPORTS IMPOSITION OF CURFEW NOW CONSIDERED POSSIBLE AMONG BASQUES.

8. PAPAL NUNCIO CONFIRMED TO ITALIAN AMBASSADOR ON MAY 15 THAT RECENT EVENTS HAVE PRODUCED SERIOUS STRAIN ON GOVERNMENT'S RELATIONS WITH SPANISH HIERACHY, PARTICULARLY OVER CRISTO REY ATTACKS.
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